

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for performing automated commerce ordering, comprising:

creating a budget for a transaction, the budget including a total price and at least one line item, each line item including an approved work order price, wherein one or more of the line items is created via a bidding process among a plurality of vendors; and upon verifying that the budget is within a budget maximum limit:

automatically approving the budget subsequent to the verification;

automatically creating a work order related to automated commerce for each line item, each work order specifying a vendor from the plurality of vendors to complete the work order;

transmitting the work order to the vendor electronically;

receiving invoice information from the vendor, the invoice information being received in response to the transmitted work order and including an invoiced price;

automatically approving the invoiced price upon verifying that the invoiced price is within the approved work order price or a preset overage tolerance; and automatically initiating payment of the approved invoice price to the vendor.

2. (Canceled)

3. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein payment of the approved invoice price to the vendor is provided via check or direct deposit.

4. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the budget exceeds a budget maximum if the total price exceeds a total budget maximum.

5. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the budget exceeds a budget maximum if the approved work order price exceeds a line item maximum.

6. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
if the budget exceeds a budget maximum, requiring a manager approval before approving the budget.

7. (Original) The method of claim 6, wherein the manager approval is provided using a workflow.

8. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
if the budget exceeds a budget maximum, requiring a payor approval before approving the budget.

9. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
receiving a confirmation from the vendor specified on the work order after the work order has been transmitted to the vendor.

10. (Original) The method of claim 9, wherein the confirmation specifies a modified price.

11. (Original) The method of claim 10, further comprising:
if the modified price is greater than the approved work order price, and the modified price is approved, reflecting the modified price as a budget variance.

12. (Original) The method of claim 11, further comprising:
if the invoiced price is greater than the approved modified price, performing dispute resolution.

13. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 1, wherein initiating payment includes a payor directly paying a vendor.

14. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 1, wherein initiating payment includes a payor making a payment to an account, and a vendor receiving payment from the account.

15. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 14, wherein the account is a bank account.

16. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 14, wherein initiating payment further includes receiving a file of required payments from an accounts payable system for a payor; and converting, formatting, and interfacing the received file for use in an automated clearinghouse system.

17. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 1, further comprising: charging a transaction fee.

18. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 17, wherein the transaction fee is charged to a payor.

19. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 17, wherein the transaction fee is charged to the vendor.

20. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein initiating payment includes making a batch posting, the batch posting including a payment to the vendor.

21. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 1, further comprising: receiving at least one bid, each bid specifying a cost estimate and a vendor.

22. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 21, further comprising: selecting one of the at least one bid.

23. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 22, wherein the vendor specified by the selected bid is selected to complete the work order.

24. (Withdrawn) A method for electronic ordering, comprising:

receiving a request for an ordered item;

generating a receivable call for the ordered item;

placing an order with a vendor for the ordered item;

generating a call to the vendor;

determining an invoiced price for an item; and

initiating and facilitating payment to the vendor.

25. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 24, further comprising:

assessing a price module to determine an expected price for the ordered item.

26. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 24, further comprising:

storing a record of the receivable call in a data repository.

27. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 24, further comprising:

receiving a confirmation from the vendor for delivery of the ordered item.

28. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 27, wherein the confirmation specifies a modified price for the ordered item.

29. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 28, further comprising:

if the invoiced price is greater than the modified price, performing dispute resolution.

30. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 24, wherein determining an invoiced price for an item comprises:

receiving invoicing information for the ordered item from the vendor, the invoicing information specifying an invoiced price.

31. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 30, further comprising:
generating an invoice from the invoicing information.

32. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 24, further comprising:
if the invoiced price is greater than an approved price, performing dispute resolution.

33. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 32, further comprising:
automatically approving the invoiced price if the invoiced price does not exceed the approved price or a preset overage tolerance; and
providing a workflow queue for approval of invoices that exceed the approved price prior to initiating payment.

34. (Currently Amended) A computer program product comprising a computer usable medium having control logic stored therein for causing a computer to perform electronic expense tracking, the control logic comprising:

first computer readable program code means for creating a budget for a transaction, the budget including a total price and at least one line item, each line item including an approved work order price, wherein one or more of the line items is created via a bidding process among a plurality of vendors;

second computer readable program code means for verifying that the budget is within a budget maximum limit;

third computer readable program code means for automatically approving the budget subsequent to the verification;

fourth computer readable program code means for automatically creating a work order relating to automated commerce for each line item after approval of the budget, each work order specifying a vendor from the plurality of vendors to complete the work order;

fifth computer readable program code means for transmitting the work order to the vendor electronically;

sixth computer readable program code means for receiving invoice information from the vendor, the invoice information being received in response to the transmitted work order and including an invoiced price;

seventh computer readable program code means for automatically approving the invoiced price upon verifying that the invoiced price is within the approved work order price or a preset overage tolerance; and

eighth computer readable program code means for automatically initiating payment of the approved invoice price to the vendor.

35. (Currently Amended) A system for electronic expense tracking, comprising:

a processor;

a user interface functioning via the processor;

a transmitter accessible by the processor for transmitting information; and

a receiver accessible by the processor for receiving information;

wherein a budget is created via the processor using information input into the user interface, the budget including at least one line item, each line item including an

approved work order price, wherein one or more of the line items is created via a bidding process among a plurality of vendors; and

wherein, upon verifying that the budget is within a budget maximum limit:
the budget is automatically approved via the processor subsequent to the verification;

a work order relating to automated commerce is automatically created for each line item via the processor, each work order specifying a vendor from the plurality of vendors to complete the work order;

the work order is transmitted to the vendor via the transmitter,

invoice information is received from the vendor via the receiver, the invoice information being received in response to the transmitted work order and including an invoiced price;

the invoiced price is automatically approved via the processor upon verifying that the invoiced price is within the approved work order price or a preset price overage tolerance; and

payment of the approved invoice price to the vendor is automatically initiated via the processor.

36. (Original) The system of claim 35, wherein the processor is housed on a terminal.

37. (Original) The system of claim 36, wherein the terminal is selected from a group consisting of a personal computer, a minicomputer, a main frame computer, a microcomputer, a hand held device, and a telephonic device.

38. (Original) The system of claim 35, wherein the processor is housed on a server.

39. (Original) The system of claim 38, wherein the server is selected from a group consisting of a personal computer, a minicomputer, a microcomputer, and a main frame computer.

40. (Original) The system of claim 38, wherein the server is coupled to a network.

41. (Original) The system of claim 40, wherein the network is the Internet.

42. (Original) The system of claim 38, wherein the server is coupled to the network via a coupling.

43. (Original) The system of claim 42, wherein the coupling is selected from a group consisting of a wired connection, a wireless connection, and a fiberoptic connection.

44. (Original) The system of claim 35, wherein the repository is housed on a server.

45. (Original) The system of claim 44, wherein the server is coupled to a network.

46. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the specified vendor to complete the work order is selected automatically.